RESEARCH HIGHLIGHT

July 2004

Socio-economic Series 04-033

A REVIEW OF TRAINING AND DELIVERY OPTIONS CONCERNING ABORIGINAL HOUSING

INTRODUCTION

One of the consequences of the growing Aboriginal population and of the greater control Aboriginal groups have over their housing portfolio, is that Aboriginals' housing skills in the areas of management, construction and repairs will become increasingly important. In view of this, and of budget constraints, training will need to become as effective as possible.

The overall project objective was to identify training approaches that were innovative, could supplement the more conventional approach of a teacher-student exchange and could be successfully applied to future housing-related Aboriginal training programs.

METHODOLOGY

Information was sought both nationally and internationally from public, private and Aboriginal sources involved in the delivery of training programs to address the following main research themes:

Question 1

What housing-related training and training delivery approaches have been used over the last 10 years?

Question 2

What innovative training and delivery approaches other than the conventional techniques of teacher-student exchange, have been successfully applied in reference to Aboriginal People and First Nations communities in Canada?

Question 3

Where can funding for unconventional training and delivery ventures be obtained?

The research was carried out in two phases. The initial phase included a review of a wide variety of alternative and innovative training programs dealing with numerous training topics including, but not limited to, housing-related training. The researchers also examined geographical and cultural variances in defining successful training initiatives and what was innovative.

The review encompassed initiatives that were undertaken during a 10-year period (1991 to 2001) in Canada and abroad. Approximately 60 training programs were reviewed as part of the initial phase of the research.

For the second phase, eleven training programs in the preliminary review were identified as providing innovative and alternative training techniques that applied to Aboriginal People in Canada in the area of housing-related training. An in-depth analysis was undertaken of these eleven initiatives.

RESULTS

Question 1

What housing-related training and training delivery approaches have been used over the last 10 years?

A variety of approaches are being used to facilitate delivery of training programs.

Increased use of information technology, such as video conferencing and Internet-based training is evident, as well as the use of other technologies, such as computerized programs (CD-ROM) in support of a student-teacher exchange.

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Community-based programs for apprenticeship-like and on-the-job training is evidence of the priority now being given to supporting conditions that ensure the success of the training initiative. While apprenticeship and on-the-job training are not, in themselves, innovative training approaches, the provision of a classroom component in the learner's community is considered an innovation. A train-the-trainer approach is being used successfully as a method of developing capacity in communities and providing a cadre of skilled facilitators who can reflect and address local concerns and issues in the delivery of training programs. Mentoring has been used to provide senior-level professional training with the guidance of an experienced executive within the sponsoring organization.

Question 2

What innovative training and delivery approaches, other than the conventional techniques of teacher-student exchange, have been successfully applied in reference to Aboriginal People and First Nations communities in Canada?

Seven innovative approaches that applied to housing-related training programs were identified:

Distribution of Audiovisual Training Aids

- Carleton University (Ottawa) Instructional Television (ITV) "Tapes-to-You" Service (ongoing)

Lectures and classes offered by Carleton University are videotaped and the tapes are made available to students through a library-like lending service. The ITV methodology allows flexibility, as learners have up to six weeks to use the tapes and are permitted to make copies, allowing them to review the lessons as a refresher.

Although this service does not specifically target Aboriginal students, instructional television provides students with an alternative access to degree-credit courses when on-campus attendance is not possible due to work schedules, family responsibilities or distance from the campus. In the case of Aboriginal learners who live in remote and northern locations this is a useful and applicable alternative delivery approach.

Video Conferencing

- Atii Distance Education Pilot (1993)
- Consilium, Organization Development and Training Consultants—Museum Management Development (March 2000 to 2001)
- Yukon College—Videoconferencing (2001 and ongoing)

Videoconferencing has been used primarily to reach learners in northern and remote communities. The primary benefit of this approach is that it provides access to resources that are not available or would be too costly to bring into the community.

This approach also allows teachers to incorporate other technologies into their teaching methodologies. For example, forms that students are required to complete can be filmed with a digital camera and shown to the students while the teacher gives step-by-step instructions. Videos relevant to the course can also be shown.

Live presentations by subject-matter experts can be shared simultaneously with other communities, or a speaker can be videotaped and viewed at a later date by all participating communities. Through the use of a video link, learners can tour a jobsite which adds considerable support to the curriculum. In support of the video-conferencing, self-paced text material and assignments are included in the curriculum.

Internet-based/Online Training

- Centre for Indigenous Peoples' Nutrition and Environment (CINE), McGill University (1999 and ongoing)

The use of Internet-based training is increasing as the technology improves and becomes widely available. Internet-based training utilizes an interactive Web site to deliver curriculum and programs that are usually designed in a series of modules in the form of assignments. A Web browser is used to obtain lessons, demonstrations, reference materials, quizzes and assignments.

Interaction between learners and the instructors occurs through telephone discussions and in a discussion format by using an online meeting room. Use of the Internet to link to other Web sites and interact in the "meeting room" encourages participants to use the Internet as a learning tool.

CD-ROM and Hands-on Training

- Cree Regional Authority (CRA)—Circuit Rider Training, Preventative Maintenance Practices (2000 and ongoing)

This approach utilizes a computerized maintenance management system that identifies and tracks preventive maintenance processes for housing portfolios.

In support of the computerized systems, learners are provided with hands-on training that correlates with a preventive maintenance manual and ongoing support from trainers. One of the key aspects of the training program is the support provided by trainers, who travel to the community to provide hands-on demonstrations. Participants are able to remain in their community, working with the program as it relates directly to their portfolio, thus developing hands-on experience.

Apprenticeship or On-the-Job Training

- Blood Vein First Nation Community-Based Apprenticeship Training (2001 to 2002)
- (Western Australia) Remote Areas Essential Services Program (since 1999)
- Whitefish Lake First Nation (Ontario) - Carpenty–Construction Training (1998 to 2000)

Apprenticeship training is a long-standing approach that has been used to successfully transfer skills. Training programs include a classroom component facilitated by an accredited educational facility, combined with on-the-job training. This methodology has been used successfully, particularly in more urban settings, in the field of building trades training. While this approach is successful for learners located in proximity to the educational facility, those located in a rural or remote location may face difficulties.

There is evidence of a move to a community-based approach for on-the-job training programs. The success of this approach is due, in large part, to the fact that trainees are allowed to remain in their community for the duration of the training. Those who are employed by the community have an increased incentive to participate, as they receive a salary while learning the skills required. This approach provides a cadre of skilled workers within the community, who are often employed by the community once the training is complete.

Train-the-Trainer

- Manitoba Association of Friendship Centers—Urban Multipurpose Aboriginal Youth Centers Initiative (UMAYC), Community-Based Training Pilot Project (2001 to 2003)

The use of a train-the-trainer approach to train individuals within a community or organization is a successful method to ensure that a cadre of skilled trainers is available to deliver resources to a target group. This method trains local individuals to deliver a training program that ensures that an understanding of local issues and concerns is reflected in the delivery of the course material. Where the training program is regionally specific, the potential trainers are often involved in the development of the course curriculum to ensure that local and regional concerns and resources are included. Graduates of the program are then able to deliver the curriculum.

Mentoring

- Sivuliuqtit Nunavut Management Development Program (1996 to 1999)

This form of training has been used for senior-level professional training. Mentoring programs provide guidance and experience for a senior-level person within an organization. The program combines classroom learning with work assignments that are directed by the mentor. It is expected that the learner who participates in a mentoring program would have a high level of skills and sufficient work experience to meet the expectations of this type of training approach.

All of the innovative approaches studied demonstrate that there exist opportunities to incorporate innovations into the delivery of training programs.

Videoconferencing technology is ideally applied to courses that contain a series of modules that can be facilitated independently. This method is considered cost-effective when examining the cost per hour of training delivered via videoconferencing compared to the cost to bring subject matter experts into remote and northern communities.

In addition, the interactive nature of a videoconferencing link encourages the development of a learner's network—an additional benefit that continues to assist the learners as they apply the skills and knowledge gained through the training program in their real work experiences.

Where it is cost-effective to do so, videoconferencing should always be considered as a vehicle for delivery of training programs. The approach would assist in making training initiatives more widely available, particularly when learners are located in northern and remote locations.

Internet-based training is suitable for programs designed to enhance or upgrade specific service skills that can be delivered in a one- or two-day exchange. This "virtual classroom" approach is suitable for professional training on complex topics and where the curriculum is offered in reasonably short modules. The use of online/Internet technology is increasingly becoming a popular and widely used training methodology, as it is affordable and it allows access to learning resources in remote communities. Interaction between participants and instructors through online meeting rooms and telephone discussions enhances the self-paced learning offered as part of the course work.

The use of CD-ROM and hands-on training should be considered for any training initiative that includes an instructional component on a specific topic. Use of a CD-ROM format allows for the curriculum and related supporting resources (such as, photos, plans, spreadsheets) to be accessed easily by the learner as long as they have the required computer equipment. The CD-ROM technology allows the learners to work at their own pace to complete the course reading and practice exercises. In support of the written material, regular on-site visits by a subject matter expert from the learners community or region could provide the ongoing guidance, training and support required to implement the operational changes. Support to this process could be provided by a subject matter expert via telephone (1-800 number) and e-mail.

Community-based Apprenticeships or On-the-Job Training would be suitable for any training initiative with an overall objective to devolve delivery or administration of a program or service so that it can be delivered entirely by community members. Programs that are designed to meet such an objective would benefit by using a community-based approach, that is, where both the classroom instruction and hands-on training take place in the learners' community.

A train-the-trainer approach could be a cost-effective alternative that facilitates the building of capacity in Aboriginal communities and would also allow the training programs to be delivered by local trainers who can facilitate the training and thereby be able to reflect local concerns and respond to local issues. This approach should be considered only where the demand is sufficient (on-going) to warrant the costs required to adequately develop and maintain a cadre of qualified trainers across the country.

Mentoring could be considered a "prestige" program for senior-level management training.

Question 3

Where can funding for unconventional training and delivery ventures be obtained?

The approaches studied utilized a variety of successful partnerships with the provincial and federal governments, Aboriginal organizations and Corporate partners.

Partnerships within Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC)

Various divisions and offices within CMHC have programs specifically targeting funds for First Nation communities and for Aboriginal People.

Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) funding for trainees

HRDC offers funding vehicles for Aboriginal training attached to its Employment Insurance program (for example, through Aboriginal HR Council and regional agreements). There are housing-related training programs that involve HRDC and are overseen by an Aboriginal HR Council.

Corporate partners

Major builders, developers, resource companies, banks, and other companies with a high public profile could sponsor Aboriginal trainees and training programs. Historically, private sector organizations have sponsored individual trainees who have a training objective related to the corporate business activity. For example, a lender who is involved in housing on-reserve could be interested in increasing the skills of an individual and provide the opportunity for apprenticeship.

Contractors

Wherever there is professional involvement in an Aboriginal community, opportunities to build in a training component to the provision of services by the contractor as part of the contract work could be considered. While there would be an additional cost to the contract to cover the training component, there would be overall cost savings by combining the two activities when compared with the cost of separately delivering a training initiative. Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) has the lead on such funding opportunities.

Provinces and Territories

Training and housing are both provincial and territorial responsibilities in most cases.

CONCLUSIONS

The researchers identified a variety of innovative training methods that could be utilized in the area of housing-related training. The following are recommendations made by the consultants, based on their analysis of the research findings.

The approaches studied utilized a variety of successful partnerships with the public sector and Aboriginal organizations. Federal and provincial governments have programs with funding targeted to improving Aboriginal training (for example, HRDC programs attached to Employment Insurance). Most provincial governments are already involved in housing-related training, often with the participation of CMHC. Corporate partners who have demonstrated social responsibility and who work in Aboriginal communities could be sponsors for individual trainees on programs that have housing-related objectives and can be linked to their business activity.

All of the innovative approaches studied demonstrate that there are opportunities to incorporate innovations into the traditional teacher-student delivery of training programs. In the short term, delivery of existing curricula can utilize Internet-based or video presentation methodologies. These are cost-effective options and would result in having the training programs available to a larger audience. In the longer term, many of the approaches studied can be utilized for future training programs with suitability of the approach being driven by the needs of the learner and the funding vehicles or partnerships used to fund the initiative.

OTHER RESEARCH OF INTEREST

Free Publications:

Building Communities: First Nations Best Practices for Healthy Housing and Sustainable Community Development (Product number 62317)

Capital Replacement Planning Software Windows 95/98 (Product number 63202)

CD-ROM—*About Your House Series, Research Reports, Research Highlights* (Product number 63494)

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Housing Research at CMHC

Under Part IX of the *National Housing Act*, the Government of Canada provides funds to CMHC to conduct research into the social, economic and technical aspects of housing and related fields, and to undertake the publishing and distribution of the results of this research.

This fact sheet is one of a series intended to inform you of the nature and scope of CMHC's research.

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